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Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007

Promotion and protection of the rights of children

Rights of the Child

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/60/L.22/Rev.1

Nineteenth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly on the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/60/L.22/Rev.1 on the rights of the child (A/C.5/60/15).

2. Under the terms of paragraphs 35 and 43 (b) of draft resolution A/C.3/60/L.22/Rev.1, the General Assembly would recommend that the Secretary-General extend the mandate of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict for a further period of three years; and request the Special Representative to continue to submit reports to the General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights.

3. Paragraphs 3 to 10 of the statement of the Secretary-General provide the background of the Office of the Special Representative. The Advisory Committee recalls that the General Assembly, in its resolution 51/77 of 12 December 1996, recommended that the Secretary-General appoint for a period of three years a Special Representative on the impact of armed conflict on children, and that a Special Representative was appointed in September 1997. The mandate of the Special Representative was extended by the General Assembly for subsequent three-year periods in its resolutions 54/149 and 57/190 of 17 December 1999 and 18 December 2002, respectively. In paragraph 3 of the latter resolution, the Assembly also requested a comprehensive assessment of the scope and effectiveness of the United Nations system response, including recommendations for strengthening, mainstreaming, integrating and sustaining those activities.

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4. Since its inception, the Office of the Special Representative has been funded through voluntary contributions. The Committee recalls that the General Assembly, in its resolution 58/245 of 23 December 2003, decided that the activities under the mandate of that Office would be supported through regular budget funding. The Fifth Committee, having considered the statement of the Secretary-General, informed the General Assembly before the adoption of resolution 58/245 that, should it adopt the draft resolution, any appropriations necessary would be considered in the context of the report requested in resolution 57/190 (see A/58/652). In response, the report of the Secretary-General on the comprehensive assessment of the United Nations system response to children affected by armed conflict was issued on 3 September 2004 (A/59/331).

5. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 11 of the statement of the Secretary-General that the recommendations in paragraphs 35 and 43 (b) of draft resolution A/C.3/60/L.22/Rev.1 would reflect the continuation of the mandate of the Special Representative, as described in paragraphs 36 and 37 of resolution 51/77 and would require that necessary support be provided for effective performance of the mandate of the Office. In this regard, the Secretary-General states that necessary resources should be identified in order to further maintain in 2006, 2007 and 2008 the Office of the Special Representative, which has been responsible, inter alia, for the preparation of the reports for the past several years.

6. The Committee notes from the statement of the Secretary-General (para. 12 and table) that resource requirements for the activities of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict for the biennium 2006-2007 are estimated at $3,499,900 gross ($3,042,300 net). In accordance with the streamlined structure specified in the report of the Secretary-General on the comprehensive assessment, the Office would comprise eight temporary posts (1 Under-Secretary-General, 1 P-5, 2 P-4, 1 P-3 and 3 General Service). The cost of these posts would amount to $2,318,100 net of staff assessment, and non-post resource requirements would amount to $724,200. A break-down of non-post requirements was provided upon enquiry as follows: other staff costs ($110,000), consultants and experts ($156,000), contractual services ($60,000), general operating expenses ($46,800), hospitality ($4,000) and supplies ($10,000) and travel of staff ($337,400). The latter would be comprised of travel of the Special Representative ($220,000) and travel of programme officers ($117,400). **While the Committee is not in a position to recommend a reduction in these estimates, it is of the opinion that the projection of non-post requirements is on the high side, especially as concerns overtime (in view of the number of General Service posts requested) and travel of staff. More precise requirements will no doubt be formulated once a new Special Representative assumes office. In this regard, a delay in appointment could also impact the requirements for travel. Under the circumstances, savings should be reflected in the performance report.**

7. The Committee notes, furthermore, from paragraph 13 of the statement of the Secretary-General that with regard to the Trust Fund established to receive voluntary funds to support the activities of the Office, it is estimated that the balance of unearmarked funds as at 31 December 2005 would amount to $152,100. The Committee also notes from the Statement that these unearmarked resources could be used to cover some of the operational requirements of the Office in the biennium 2006-2007. Therefore, the additional resource requirements for the

biennium 2006-2007 of the Office would amount to $3,347,800 gross ($2,890,200 net). Furthermore, the Committee was informed that the trust fund would remain open although the Office had to date not received any voluntary contributions during 2005. Upon enquiry, the Committee was informed that there is an earmarked balance of $490,140 in the Trust Fund, consisting of $194,432 (Belgium, earmarked for the Great Lakes); $177,821 (Norway, earmarked for child conflict in Afghanistan), $25,000 (Starr Foundation, earmarked for an advertising campaign to connect children worldwide affected by war); and $92,887 (Hewlett Foundation, earmarked to strengthen capacity for advocacy and outreach to communities outside the United Nations system (radio programmes).

8. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 16 of the statement of the Secretary-General that there are no resources provided under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007 for the support of the operations of the Office in the biennium 2006-2007. Any amount that the General Assembly may decide to allocate to support the Office of the Special Representative would need to be provided through an additional appropriation for the biennium 2006-2007 in the context of operations of the contingency fund.

9. The Advisory Committee recommends that the Fifth Committee inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/C.3/60/L.22/Rev.1, additional requirements of up to $3,347,800 gross ($2,890,200 net) would arise under section 1, Overall policymaking, direction and coordination ($2,890,200), and section 35, Staff assessment ($457,600), to be offset by the same amount under Income section 1, Income from staff assessment, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007. These appropriations for the biennium 2006-2007 would be considered by the General Assembly in accordance with the procedures for the use and operation of the contingency fund.